



## PRESS RELEASE

With support from the UN World Food Programme Cambodia and the UN World Food Programme Regional Bureau in Bangkok, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of Cambodia (MOEYS) will host the annual Global Child Nutrition Forum (GCNF) organized by the Global Child Nutrition Foundation (GCNF) and the UN World Food Programme Centre of Excellence against Hunger (WFP CoE), which will be held from 2<sup>nd</sup> December to 6<sup>th</sup> December 2019 in Siem Reap. This forum will be the first time that the international conference is held in the Asia region, a region that provides many examples of how school feeding programs can act as a safety net for children, families, and the local community. The Forum will provide an opportunity to focus on the experiences matured in the region and beyond, so that strengthened, well-targeted, and nationally-owned school meal programs and services, embedded in national education and social protection systems, are leveraged to advance more effective, inclusive and comprehensive policies which lead to enhanced food and nutrition security.

More than 350 leaders from 60+ countries will meet in an effort to help governments around the world build nutritious national school meal programs that are locally-sourced and country-operated. Participants will discuss the theme *What we're learning: Enhancing value and exploring challenges and good practices in school meal program implementation*.

The Global Child Nutrition Forum is a learning exchange and technical assistance conference designed to support countries in the development and implementation of school feeding programs. Representatives of governments, NGOs, businesses, UN agencies, and academia are expected in Cambodia. The Forum is the largest annual international conference on school feeding in the world.

Every year, the Forum brings together leaders from over 50 countries around the world for intensive training, technical assistance, and planning, to facilitate the establishment of country-operated sustainable school feeding programmes. By sharing their insights, experiences, and challenges, an informal worldwide alliance of leaders dedicated to advancing school feeding has evolved. As a result, the Forum has become a global catalyst for school feeding development.

“The Forum aims to highlight issues related to child nutrition around the world, foster cooperation between nations, and encourage countries to develop and improve school nutrition programs that return multiple benefits and address multiple Sustainable Development Goals,” remarked Arlene Mitchell, Executive Director of the Global Child Nutrition Foundation. “It is also a wonderful opportunity to raise public awareness about nutrition challenges facing children in all countries and to share experience and tools to address those challenges.”

“School feeding programmes have the potential to unlock multiple benefits for school children, their families, communities, and entire nations,” said Daniel Balaban, director of the WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger in Brazil. “Gathering high-level officials from [over] 50 countries every year to discuss strategies to strengthen school feeding translates into stronger governmental commitment to school feeding and into positive impacts on education, health, and socio-economic indicators.”

The Forum is hosted in a different country each year, affording participants the opportunity to visit local schools and see one another’s programmes in action. In 2019, the Royal Government of Cambodia is offering participants the opportunity to visit schools and local farms to see first-hand Cambodia’s home-grown school feeding programme, which reaches 54,101 (26,706 girls) children in 267 schools in 7 provinces. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) and its partners’ work to promote access to quality education, nutritious diets, and social assistance for children through school feeding programs, which will be highlighted in this forum.